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RUEHLO/AMEMBASSY LONDON 0823
RUEHPB/AMEMBASSY PORT MORESBY 3501
RUEHKO/AMEMBASSY TOKYO 1016
RUEHWL/AMEMBASSY WELLINGTON 1932
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DEPARTMENT FOR EAP, EAP/MTS, EAP/ANP, OES, INR/EAP

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SUBJECT: PAPUA -- A GOOD WEEK FOR THE GOVERNOR

Classified By: Pol/C Joseph Legend Novak, reasons 1.4 (b,d).

¶1. (C) SUMMARY: Papua Governor Barnabas Suebu traveled to London this week to receive a TIME Magazine-sponsored environmental award and tout his conservation plans. Suebu will also visit Beijing where he will open the first Papua provincial government overseas office. Suebu has a solid reputation and he's gaining an increased profile. END SUMMARY.

¶2. (U) BIG IN LONDON: TIME Magazine has named Papua Governor Barnabas Suebu as one of its "Heroes of the Environment." The award recognizes his efforts to preserve Papuan forests by declaring a moratorium on timber exports and opposing new logging concessions in Indonesia's eastern-most province. Suebu received the award at an October 25 ceremony in London--which received solid media coverage back home.

¶3. (C) While in the UK, Suebu met with officials at the Department for International Development (DFID) to discuss wide-ranging cooperation on forestry and fisheries issues. While Suebu's public program focused entirely on environmental and economic issues, Foreign and Commonwealth Officials (FCO) pressed political issues in private meetings, according to UK Embassy officers in Jakarta. FCO officials underscored the importance of fully implementing Special Autonomy (an intra-governmental process which devolves functions and revenue to the provincial government), and raised reported threats and harassment directed at human rights defenders.

¶4. (SBU) BEIJING NEXT: According to Papuan contacts, Suebu will conclude his international tour with a visit to China, October 27-November 4. While there, he will inaugurate the first-ever Papuan provincial government overseas office, located in Indonesia's Beijing embassy. The office will promote trade with and investment between China and Papua, as well as facilitate educational exchanges and highlight Papuan culture.

¶5. (C) Suebu advisor Ronald Tapilatu told poloff that the governor personally lobbied President Yudhoyono on the overseas office and that the president supported the effort. Tapilatu also reported that Suebu had persuaded a skeptical Indonesian ambassador in Beijing, a retired military officer reportedly suspicious of Papuan separatist tendencies. Suebu--a firm non-separatist--won the ambassador's support with a firm pledge that the office would avoid political

matters.

¶6. (C) MORE PAPUA OFFICES?: So far, the Indonesian government has only approved the Papua office in Beijing. Suebu hopes to establish others, with Tokyo probably next. Tapilatu reported that the governor also hopes to open offices in Australia and the United States, but noted that this might face opposition from the Indonesian government. Given the prominence of Papuan political activists in those countries, including groups of Papuan independence supporters, the GOI is suspicious that possible offices might not be able to remain aloof from politics. The governor's staff is considering a push for an office attached to the Indonesian consulate in New York rather than the embassy in Washington, reasoning that the central government would accept this as more compatible politically with Papua's limited-autonomy status.

¶7. (C) RAISING HIS PROFILE: Suebu--an ethnic Papuan and the province's first democratically elected governor--has a solid reputation and is popular. He's clearly gaining an increased profile and his activities net national media coverage. That said, he comes under some criticism back home in Papua for his peripatetic ways, which lead to accusations that he could be a more hands-on manager.

¶8. (SBU) The Ambassador plans to travel to Papua November 1-5 and expects to host a reception honoring Suebu's environmental efforts when the Governor visits Jakarta at the end of his international trip.

HUME